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DATE 16 February 1962

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DEBRIEFING OF FRANCIS GARY POWERS

Tape: # 11  
Date: 16 February 1962  
Time: 1132 Hours

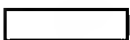
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Present:



Powers

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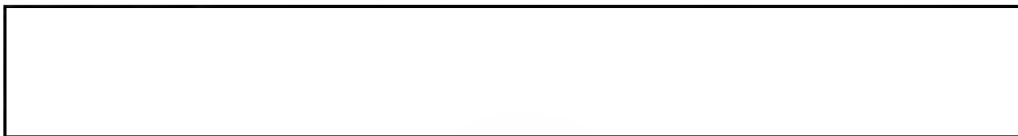
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Had you been briefed on the estimated capabilities of the Soviet surface to air missile system that you might encounter?

Powers: I had briefings on aircrafts, interceptor type aircrafts .  
I don't remember too much about the briefing on the missiles but I am sure they were mentioned but I don't remember any particulars on altitude except that I felt pretty sure that they couldn't get to this altitude because of the control problem the missiles have at that altitude. I am almost positive it was covered but I don't remember too much about it.

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25X1A9A ☐ What was the first SAMS defended area you expected to encounter on this mission? If any?

Powers: I don't remember, I can't - I really don't know.

25X1A9A ☐ Were you briefed that you would be flying over areas that were either estimated or confirmed defended by SAMS?

Powers: I really don't know - I don't remember.

25X1A9A ☐ Do you remember how they referred to these organizations? Do they refer to them as PBO the term PRO they come under.

Powers: Who was this?

25X1A9A ☐ In referring to the German Rocket Forces - something that is part of --

Powers: Soviet!

25X1A9A ☐ I'm sorry Soviet - Soviet Rocket Forces in terms of part of the PBO or part of the PRO.

Powers: No - I don't remember anything.

25X1A9A ☐ Or any designation of this.

Interrogator: There is one further question on that we touched again yesterday. I think we might look at it once again, that

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is the track of film that was brought into the building that you were being held at immediately after the incident occurred. Can you again give us some idea of the period of time involved from the time you actually came down to the ground until this track of film showed up at the building. Would you mind going over that just once more?

Powers: Well, lets see - when I was on the ground they took me into this village which I estimate took thirty minutes or so, and well I don't just know how long I had been there when they brought these pieces in, but the pieces came in at different times and I don't know which one came in first or what order it was. But, I do remember someone coming in and putting something on the floor against the wall and it was - I could see the track then.

Interro-  
gator: This was the first village you had taken?

Powers: Yes, and that set there quite a while and I don't know whether they took it with them when they took me to Sverdlovsk or not but it was well over an hour and it

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was as well as I can remember in a row with no cover on it so light was getting to this. I don't know how long it takes the light to penetrate through a roll of film that way and how much they could get out of it. But, I do know that some of the photographs they showed me showed some exposed -- what do they call it - black area on the outer edge of the film.

Interro-  
gator:

Do you recall at this point the time that the incident actually occurred did you have something that - on your log - I am sure you didn't record it on your log at that point.

Powers: No

Interro-  
gator:

Immediately prior to the -

Powers: Just before that, yes.

Interro-  
gator:

Do you recall what that time was?

Powers: No, I don't recall the time but, I am sure I can figure the time out with my map.

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Interro-

gator: Well, let me put it this way which serves the  
purpose just as well.

Powers: Seems like it was close to the hour.

Interro-

gator: You were making your -

Interro-

gator: Close to the hour.

Interro-

gator: But you were on schedule you were making your check  
points on time.

Powers: Very close at the time I am sure there was a little  
variation, but not very much. I am sure I wasn't  
running ten minutes behind or ten minutes ahead. I  
am sure it was closer -

Interro-

gator: A matter of minutes

Powers: Matter of - I would say less than ten minutes I guess  
that is as close as I can get to it. Now this is as  
well as I can remember. But it seems to me something  
like very close to the hour, maybe the fifty's I  
remember that somewhere. I don't know whether that

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involves something else but that was the time  
or probably the turning point here or rolling  
out at a point here at the beginning of the flight  
line I don't remember but I recall all these points.

Interro-  
gator:

At this point where we assume the damage occurred  
just after you made your turn is 05560 which would  
be four minutes of course prior to the hour which  
ties in with your suggestion. Would you say that  
the time element involved from the time you landed  
until the film was brought in was within an hour?  
You say thirty minutes to go to the village. You say  
that within another thirty minutes this was brought in.

Powers: I would say that it was longer than that.

Interro-  
gator:

Longer than that?

Powers: I think so. It took me thirty minutes to get there I don't  
know. As well as I can remember I would say thirty  
minutes and I was there quite a while. I would say over  
an hour before they brought this in.

Interro-  
gator:

Total lapse time about an hour and one-half.

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Powers: I would say something like that.

Interro-  
gator: Assuming that if the portion of the aircraft which had the direct tracker in it had landed in the same vicinity as your self or somewhere in that immediate vicinity it would also take them thirty minutes to bring that in after recovering it. So my assumption at this point is that the film must have been very close to this town wherever it was picked up. Would you agree that is a logical assumption?

Powers: I think maybe seeing a fairly large map of that area I could maybe pick out the place where I hid. And maybe even remember some of the things I saw from the parachute which would give an indication of where I got out of the aircraft itself and maybe where that thing came. I know I can remember seeing a lake and a dam on one side.

Interro-  
gator: A lake and a dam on which side?

Powers: It was west of me.

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Interro-

gator: West of you?

Powers: Yes

Interro-

gator: You estimated you were twenty-five miles south of Sverdlovsk when they picked you up but the incident occurred just about over the south edge of Sverdlovsk?

Powers: It was south, I was -- southeast, south or southeast and I never reached the outskirts of the city. I hadn't even gotten to the airfield. But it was only estimated a minute or so in front of me.

Interro-

gator: I see.

Powers: That was the airfield and it was several miles out of the city, I don't know exactly how far.

Interro-

gator: Is this the airfield from which you left Sverdlovsk?

Powers: I think so, but I am not positive.

Interro-

gator: This dam you mentioned a moment ago that was

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to the west of you was this when you were coming  
down the parachute?

Powers: Yes

Interro-  
gator: And you were sufficiently oriented so you could  
definitely say it was to your west?

Powers: Yes, it was - from where I was it - well lets see -  
city was to the north it was west.

Interro-  
gator: You could see the city as you were coming down?

Powers: Well, it seems to me that I even saw a control  
tower of an air field but that is very vague, I don't  
know.

Interro-  
gator: But you feel quite certain it was to the west?

Powers: Yes, I feel-

Interro-  
gator: Sometimes in coming down a parachute I imagine-

Powers: Well see, I had looked at these maps and I knew  
the direction the rivers were running and where  
the city was but, there was something else that

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might be a little confusing because these maps were cut out of strips and put on the cards so north might be here or there but I would have to see a map and the route itself to actually know. But I am sure I was on the eastern side of this river, I think.

Interro-  
gator:

Did you in addition to the tracker were you able to identify any other pieces of the aircraft that they brought in or anything that may be sensitive at all?

Powers:

There was -- something that I saw at the time that had some writing on it I don't know whether it had to do with fueling or how to open a canopy or what. But there was something --

Interro-  
gator:

A metal plate of some kind?

Powers:

With English writing on it. In small pieces of metal. It was torn up some. I don't remember exactly what it referred to.

Interro-  
gator:

In their bragging about their missile system

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did they ever get carried away and mention  
systems they might have to shoot down missiles?

Powers: Now I heard about this somewhere, but it might  
have been through their newspapers or radio or  
something.

Interro-  
gator: Was it in the context of the same one they wrote  
up decorating the Captain for or was it in terms  
of -

Powers: No, it wasn't connected with that, I think it was  
later. It came out maybe in one of Khrushchev's  
speeches or something that they could shoot down  
missiles.

Interro-  
gator: There have been such speeches.

Powers: But in relation to the interrogation or any  
information I saw on this particular missile that  
they shot me down with, there was nothing about  
that.

Interro-  
gator: The interrogators didn't offer any such additional  
claims of their abilities to do this sort of thing.



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Powers: I don't think so.

Interro-  
gator: What was your last air speed forward that you noted as indicated on your gadgets on your dash board or whatever you call it.

Powers: I don't know.

Interro-  
gator: Or RPM's or -

Powers: I know-

Interro-  
gator: Do you know how fast you were moving in the line you were moving?

Powers: Yes, I was following the speed schedule that I was supposed to follow. But, as far as remembering what it was I don't know because it varies a little bit with different aircrafts.

Interro-  
gator: But it would be on a map or one of your charts?  
Somewhere -

Powers: You still have speed schedules of this particular airplane some of them you know varied a few knots.

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Interro-

gator: They did and I think it is available in the files.

But it is right around 400 knots, 402 some --

Powers: Over a hundred but not much over a hundred.

Interro-

gator: Right around ninty-nine a hundred --

Powers: Oh no that is right at 70 in this word it was - lets  
see -- I think it was under a hundred. I don't know but  
I recorded those things and followed the schedule  
and kept an eye on that fairly close.

Interro-

gator: The reason I say that is because the forward momentum  
of the ship will have to account for certain distribution  
of parts on the ground and I just thought that --

Powers: Yes, well I don't think there would be much forward  
momentum because with this same turning broadside  
to the flight path I am sure it turned down very fast.

Interro-

gator: I see you still have Newton's laws --

Powers: Also the winds --

Interro-

gator: What true air speed did you use for planning on this --  
did you use 420 -- 415 is what we use.

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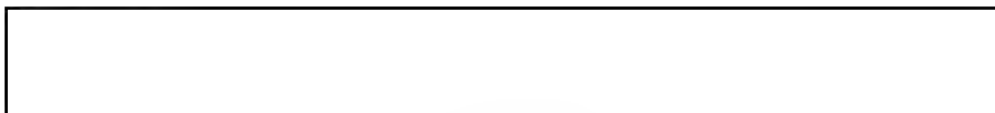
Powers: It was lower.

Interro-  
gator: That's in the J-57 and the J-75 and it is around  
405 with true air speed. That was our true  
that we carried. Now Gary's right you see  
these things vary with aircraft and we had  
just made a new air speed schedule up because  
we had just took the altimeter and ran it through  
a Buzz Johnson's calibration box there at  
[ ] before the flight, and came up with the  
altimeter air and naturally that was the air speed  
schedule.

Interro-  
gator: The last time you recall reading the instruments  
in the cockpit was there anything out of normal?

Powers: Everything was normal.

Interro-  
gator: One other thing -- of all the parts of the airplane  
you saw, when they brought the tracker in at  
Gorki Park and everywhere else, what parts did  
you see burn?



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Powers: I can't remember seeing anything burned, and I was particularly interested in the tail section because I thought that this tail section came off the jet blast would have scorched the paint somewhere, and I didn't notice any scorched parts.

Interro-  
gator: So the only thing you saw that had indications of burn was the ----

Powers: The papers they brought in, the black charred part of the flight map I think maybe -- the cover of the let-down book, I'm not sure.

Interro-  
gator: Were those located in the cockpit in such a place that escaping oxygen from breaking this hose could have caused a small fire there which as soon as the oxygen was relieved could go out because of altitude.

Powers: Now did we have an emergency oxygen bottle in this --- we did, and the fact charts were in the same compartment with this emergency oxygen bottle.

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There is a little place on the left end side that is actually designed to put these publications in but we had an emergency system that we kept in there also, it made it crowded but if that thing -- see there is no way for that oxygen to escape. So if that bottle bursted when it hit it would --

Interro-  
gator:

It would have very well caused a flash fire that would not have necessarily have damaged the --

Powers:

And it seems to me that I can remember them saying something about it or it appeared in some of the written evidence presented by people who saw this. They put guards around this stuff very shortly after these things hit the ground and would not let people approach near to it. So it would be a while before someone got there to look it over I feel fairly sure. Maybe someone would go up to put out any fire if they had the equipment but this was out in the country and I doubt if anyone was carrying a fire extinguisher.

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Interro-

gator: As I recall they did ask you -- did they show  
you pictures of the cockpit and ask you to identify  
it or did they actually let you see the cockpit?

Powers: No they showed me no pictures of the cockpit.

Interro-

gator: Isn't there one point that you said that if you  
could see the cockpit you would be able to  
identify whether this was your aircraft or not.  
Wasn't it something to that affect? I don't recall  
a date on this.

Powers: Yes, I can remember something like this.

Interro-

gator: But you don't remember --

Powers: They wanted to know for sure if I could identify  
each part of this as being my aircraft, I think, it  
was and I told them if I could see the cockpit I could  
identify it positive.

Interro-

gator: Did you ever see the cockpit?

Powers: No, it was, I'm sure it was destroyed. They never  
showed it to me. They had a lot of the instruments

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but, I don't remember, I know the canopy  
and seemed like part of the forward part of  
the canopy that is attached to the airplane.

Interro-  
gator: The windshields?

Powers: The windshields.

Interro-  
gator: Did they comment at all about the sexton  
capability in your aircraft or do you think  
the sexton was destroyed?

Powers: Lets see - it did seem like they did ask me a  
few questions on that, but I can't remember  
it being pressed very much. I feel pretty  
sure they asked me if I used it and I think  
I told them I attempted to but I didn't get  
the results I wanted and stopped.

Interro-  
gator: I can't think of anything else from my stand point.

Interro-  
gator: He gave us some recommendations from the  
E & E side of the house now from an operational  
side of the house are there any recommendations

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you have at all you might make some notes  
on here?

Powers: I think this particular airplane we flew for a  
long time and we were very confident in it and I  
don't think there was too much reason to have a  
detonator that would not explode on impact. At  
first we thought this airplane probably wouldn't  
stand up under too many landings. But, it  
proved to be very good and we worried about  
something happening to the landing gear and  
having to make a forced landing without the  
wheels, or something, it might be pretty rough  
and it might explode. But, I believe they could  
fix a detonator on one of these things that  
wouldn't be dangerous lets say with a normal  
forced landing that a pilot might have if he had  
control of the airplane if he didn't have control  
of the airplane he would get out. If he couldn't  
get out he would be dead anyway so it wouldn't  
make any difference.

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Interro-  
gator: Couldn't it be in the same token be a detonator that could deactivate if he found himself in a situation such as this making a landing in unfriendly areas.

Powers: Yes, to make sure that you could disarm the thing so that it would not explode on impact if you so desired. But, you could arm it so that an impact would cause it to explode if you wanted it to do that.

Interro-  
gator: In other words if you armed it just before decent and you are making a normal decent you disarm you would be safe all during the landing even if you had a --

Powers: I would suggest that on the map you arm the thing for impact explosion when you cross water or somewhere you would want it to explode.

Interro-  
gator: What was the time of setting on - I have forgotten.

Powers: As well as I can remember - 70 seconds.

Interro-  
gator: 70 seconds, I have heard 50 to 70 seconds.

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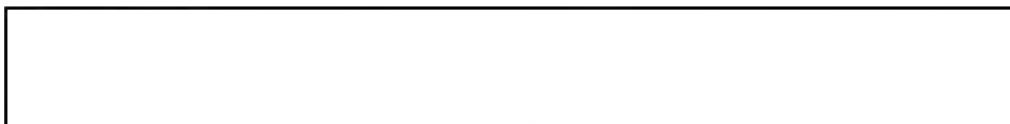
Powers: Well, they varied on different aircrafts we had it written on the timer box itself, and I recall 70 seconds. Now it could have been one of the other airplanes but I think it was this one. In fact I am pretty sure.

Interro-  
gator: Is there anything else Frank?

Powers: Well lets see -- I'm sure I am going to think of a lot of things later that I can write down. I want you to give me some things to be thinking about, a list of things to be thinking about something I can make recommendations on and I will try to think of these things and make note of them so I can give the information to anyone who wants it.

Interro-  
gator: I think I asked you this from yesterday. Why do you think they let you go? Made the exchange? I know you have thought about this.

Powers: Well, it came as a complete surprise because I had heard through the news media that I had that the



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international relations were the worst they had been in many, many years and I had given up hope that anything ever happening until the relations got better. Berlin the way it was I just knew nothing could happen. It came as a complete surprise when they let me know that there was something going on. Why they did it I have no idea except that maybe they wanted Abel. But, now this is another odd thing, they never mentioned to me that they were making some sort of an exchange that they were getting a man back. They told me -- I asked them why, and they said, I don't remember their exact words but it implied that we are nice people that we want to prove to the world that we are trying to better the relations and your relatives have asked for clemency from the Supreme Soviet. And, the first time I knew anything about Abel was when Joe pointed him out to me on the bridge after I had already gotten across the white line. Now there was no reason for them to withhold this from

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me because they knew I would be told about this probably right there on the bridge. I know they told me several times that they had nothing against me in particular, that it was the people who made the policy that the gripe was with and I remember my Father sent me a news clipping of Khrushchev had an interview with one of the American correspondents he had stated there was no reason to keep me there that I wasn't important enough to stay there and serve the whole sentence -- something like that. I have it in my letters downstairs. That was -- that made me feel good. They tried to give the impression that it was the goodness of their hearts to improve relations and that was why it was being done.

Interro-  
gator:

This is a stop somewhere after about one inch of recording on tape # 11. The team of Messrs. [ ]

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[ ] have concluded their initial debriefing. Present of course Mr. Powers and

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[ ] and the time is now two minutes of twelve noon.

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